DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 318 960 CG 022 507

AUTHOR Rosenfield, Sylvia
TITLE Educating School Psychologists for Restructured Schools.
PUB DATE Apr 90
NOTE 21p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Association of School Psychologists (22nd, San Francisco, CA, April 17-22, 1990).
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Consultation Programs; *Counselor Training; Elementary Secondary Education; Interdisciplinary Approach; Organizational Change; *School Psychologists; *School Restructuring

ABSTRACT

Restructuring schools implies not only different organizational structures and different ways of operating, but different underlying assumptions. Restructuring schools would include changes in human relationships, changes in incentive structures, changes in how people work and relate to one another, and changes in some of the assumptions made about etiology and treatment of problems. One possible alteration congruent with the restructuring movement would involve the development of core integrated building instructional support teams. For effective functioning on such teams, school psychologists would need skills in collaborative consultation, as well as classroom-based assessment and intervention skills. Educational issues relevant to training school psychologists for these functions include: appropriate socialization about the purpose and importance of consultation services; and the requisite skills for consultation, assessment and intervention. If there is to be restructuring in the schools, and if school psychology is to play a significant role in this process, the training programs will become an important arena for change. (Author/ABL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED318960

EDUCATING SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS FOR RESTRUCTURED SCHOOLS

Sylvia Rosenfield

Temple University

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Sylvia Rosenfield

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

CG 022507

Paper Presented at NASP, April, 1990, San Francisco

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Abstract

Restructuring schools would involve fundamental alterations in how problems in schools are addressed. One possible alteration congruent with the restructuring movement would involve the development of core integrated building instructional support teams. For effective functioning on such teams, school psychologists would need skills in collaborative consultation, as well as classroom-based assessment and intervention skills. Educational issues relevant to training school psychologists for these functions include: appropriate socialization about the purpose and importance of consultation services; and the requisite skills for consultation, assessment and intervention.

Educating School Psychologists For Restructured Schools

Sylvia Rosenfield

Temple University

Restructuring schools is a phrase on many people's lips these days. In order to provide more than lip service to this concept, we need not only to understand what it means, but also to consider how it might impact upon the delivery of school psychological services and the training necessary to function effectively within newly reconceptualized systems.

Restructuring the schools, in most of the on-going debate and discussion, implies not only different organizational structures and different ways of operating, but different underlying philosophical assumptions. There would be changes in human relationships, changes in incentive structures, changes in how people work and relate to one another; but also changes in some of the assumptions we made about etiology and treatment of problems. It is of a

different order from more limited reforms such as tinkering with how discrepancy formulas for Learning Disability are computed, or developing new IQ tests for the assessment battery, or involving parents at an earlier stage in the assessment process. Such changes might possibly improve the current system, but the role of the school psychologist and the special education structures would remain intact. Students would continue to be referred, assessed and placed. The restructuring movement implies far greater need for change.

The problems with the current system of delivering special services have been extensively documented elsewhere (e.g., Rosenfield & Reynolds, 1990), and numerous basic issues have been identified. Slavin, Madden, and Karweit (1990) recently summarized the literature and identified several important conclusions, including:

> The SETTING within which remedial or special education services are provided makes little difference. What does matter is the quality of the PROGRAMS implemented in the setting....
>
> Remedial and special education services are too often poorly integrated with the regular education program, and therefore burden at-risk students with the task of accommodating very different approaches. Collaboration and consistency between regular, remedial, and special education are essential....

> Teacher behaviors associated with outstanding achievement gains for students in Chapter 1 pullout programs and for mainstreamed academicaly handicapped students in regular classrooms tend to be similar to behaviors found to be effective with all students. This and other research tends to suggest that effective practices for students at risk tend not to be qualitatively different from the best practices of general education." (pp. 355-356)

They concluded that:

> Major changes are needed in our approach to education of students at risk for school failure. Although many improvements can and should be made within the programs most typically seen today,...to make a marked difference in the chance that at-risk students will succeeed in school and in life, fundamental changes are needed in the basic organization of the elementary school (p. 356).

Thus, special education restructuring would involve more fundamental alterations in how problems in schools are addressed.

One of the models for reconstructing how educators address the problems of at risk and low achieving students is that of the core integrated building instructional support team. The team concept is related to other educational restructuring themes such as building-site management, collaborative problem solving within the school, and

assumptions that school staff need to be accountable for student outcome measures. The team concept has multiple names. A recent survey by Fudell and Dougherty of state education departments elicited 13 different terms, presented in Table 1. The teams are directed towards providing effective support services to enable school staff to resolve problems at the classroom and building level rather than to rely on separate systems, such as special education or Chapter 1, to be responsible for some of the students.

Insert Table 1 About Here

The restructuring of services using such teams is currently spreading. In the 1989 survey of state education departments cited above, seven states/protectorates had mandated teacher assistance teams, and 36 states or protectorates had districts where team models were either emerging as pilot projects (8) or functioning on a voluntary basis. The Pennsylvania Bureau of Special Education has a mandate to develop such teams, and there are several pilot projects underway.

Among the numerous implementation issues--and there are many, a crucial one is that of training of professionals, both inservice and preservice. In an article that should be mandated reading for every educator interested in school

reform, Weatherley and Lipsky (1977) documented the early years of Chapter 766 in Massachusetts, the precursor of P.L. 94-142. Reading it in the context of current educational and special education restructuring, one is reminded of the immortal words of Yogi Berra--it ia truly "deja vue all over again." Among the lessons they drew from the problems in implementation of the special education changes in the 1970's, many of which are the same problems that are haunting us today, is that:

> An essential beginning in special education reform is the careful preparation of local personnel. Training classroom teachers to be better prepared and more confident in handling children with special needs is particularly important. Specialists need training in consultative skills so that they may better support classroom teachers. Unless roles are redefined and personnel prepared to meet new requirements, children will continue to be shunted from one specialist to the next with no one having responsibility for the whole child. (p. 195).

The question respecting training then becomes, what skills do school psychologists need in order to function as participating members of these teams.

Three areas have been identified for effective

participation on these building level instructional support teams: collaborative consultation, including problem solving and communication skills, as a service delivery model; assessment techniques with treatment validity; and school-based instructional and behavioral interventions. Training programs need to provide training, if not to mastery, at least well beyond the awareness stage. To do so in each of these areas, supervised guided practice in utilizing critical skills must be included. In a study of usage by school psychologists of behavioral techniques, Shapiro and Lentz found that practicing school psychologists had been trained in behavioral technique but there was a strong relationship between use in practice and direct supervision in implementation during training. They found that: "The less direct the exposure to procedures (e.g., through course work or reading about it), the less likely one is to use the technique" (p. 334). In other words, it will not be enough to revise training programs or present inservice workshops. Supervised field practice in integrating these skills is essential to use. Modification of internship and practicum training as well as course work at the program site are required.

There is not time here for a complete review and integration of training issues related to training in this context (see Idol & West, 1987, for a review of consultation training). A review of these is not my purpose here, but I

would like to suggest several training issues, focussing most on consultation training, but briefly suggesting some ways to think about the structuring of assessment and intervention training as well.

Educational Issues

Education as Socialization

Students are socialized into modes of practice through training. What program faculty perceive to be the most central skills receive the bulk of attention in the training programs. Intentionally or not, a message is delivered. It is not yet clear that consultation as a service delivery system is perceived by students as a major focus of practice. The importance of indirect service delivery through consultation must be stressed in training. It is not an add-on, but a basic set of skills--to be taught and practiced, rather than mentioned in passing or a topic as part of a course, say on behavioral techniques. If the bulk of instruction and practice is devoted to assessment in training programs, it is not likely that consultation will be perceived as central to functioning.

Education in the Consultation Process

Training in consultation has tended to be connected to a particular type of content rather than to a process. Rather than focus on the content of consultation (behavioral, mental

health, organizational), the process of consultation needs to be considered a critical set of skills to develop. The value of the collaborative consultation model in working on instructional support teams, the development of effective interpersonal and communication skills, and usage of problem solving strategies are not tied to a single type of content but could be viewed as a service delivery system. The relationship between consultative strategies, resistance, and treatment adherence issues needs to be reconceptualized within this paradigm. For example, responses to types of treatments could be considered in the light of different consultative strategies, rather than in terms of the content of the treatment. Perhaps it is in the process of planning interventions together by consultant and consultee that what we call resistance is created or minimized.

Consultation as A Knowledge Dissemination System

Consultation in restructured schools should be viewed as an important mechanism for the transfer of psychological knowledge to the educational process. A recent New York Times article in the Education section was headlined, "In the Research Arena, Oat Bran Beats Reading" (Wells, 1989)--the point here being that in fields like health, research findings are translated into behavior, while in education, nothing much happens to effective techniques in terms of their widespread use. Increasingly the literature contains references to the fragmentation of useful information and

knowledge. While we continue to extol the scientist-practitioner model, and have recently had a conference on the education of practitioners in this model, it is not altogether clear how the integration of science and practice is to be done.

A poignant expression of this issue was written by the cultural anthropologist, Ernest Becker, who observed that in the late 20th century, knowledge is "strewn all over the place, spoken in a thousand competitive voices. Its insignificant fragments are magnified out of all proportion, while its major and world-historical insight lie around begging for attention. There is no throbbing vital center". Commenting upon this, Russell suggested that knowledge about child and adolescent development and programs serving their needs seems similarly fragmented and "strewn all over the place," lacking a "throbbing vital center" or linkage to decision making (p. 5).

In an interesting discussion of the application of psychological research to practice, Claude Levy-Leboyer (1988) described the consultative process as central to the application of psychological knowledge:

> Applying research results involves more than giving the truth and proving it; researchers must also develop a persuasion and training process and keep the client's perception of the problem in mind throughout the

> process....applying psychology and doing applied research in real-world settings are very creative processes. Three characteristics give applied psychology its heuristic value: lack of routine, complexity, and human plasticity" (p. 784-785).

Currently in our work on one such team, we are working with the school staff to examine curriculum practices from the perspective of developmental psychology. It is not enough for us simply to inform the kindergarten staff that their goals, objectives and instructional materials are inappropriate for the developmental level of the students. We need to interpret this research and work with them to integrate the knowledge in ways that are comfortable and meaningful to them as they develop alternative models. Modifying the curriculum using what we know as psychologists in the educational enterprise is a creative enterprise.

Educatinging Reflective Practioners

In describing professional applied practice in all its complexity in real world situations, Levy-Leboyer (1988) raises a fourth consideration relevant to training. His analysis of professional practice is not much different from that of Schoen (1987), who also describes a different type of practitioner and training process, involving a more complex view of the world of practice and the kind of mental processes which must be trained if the practitioner is to

emerge with the necessary perspective to be effective. The painful effects of the lack of such training and skill is documented in a book that should be required reading for school psychologists in training, Testers and Testing: The Sociology of School Psychology (Milofsky, 1989). Milofsky, a sociologist who has studied the behavior of school psychologists as street-level bureaucrats implementing policy, documents the process by which routine testing comes to dominate the work lives of some school psychologists, while others "resist apparent coercion and gain support for playing an independent, creative role" (p. 72). The work of Pryzwansky (1989) on the cognitive processing of school psychologists during the consultation problem solving process and Barnett (1988) on professional judgements in planning assessment and intervention provide examples of the types of research we need to encourage on training practitioners for complex roles on comprehensive instructional support teams.

Educating for Expertise in Assessment, Intervention and Research

But not only is the process in need of significant reorganization, much of the training in assessment, intervention, and research would be different for practice in restructured schools. For example, just suppose the IQ test were no longer the introduction to training. Two recent publications, the critical issue mini-series in the Journal of Learning Disabilities (Wong, 1989) and Hilliard's (1989)

article in Diagnostique, "Back to Binet: The Case Against the Use of IQ tests in the Schools, provide increasing fuel for the down-playing of IQ testing in practice. But suppose we could eliminate IQ testing from our training curriculum. CBA/CBM are not new assessment techniques, designed to replace or be added to IQ testing in the classification/diagnostic process. They arise out of a different framework, in which the purpose of assessment is to provide information to school personnel for intervention planning. A major criterion for introducing an asssessment technique would be demonstrated treatment utility.

Interventions would focus on specific strategies that have demonstrated outcomes. Particularly when working on collaborative problem solving teams, school psychologists can serve a double function. They can bring awareness of new and effective techniques to the process. But in addition, they can provide assistance and expertise in evaluating the effectiveness of research-based techniques in the particular context at issue.

Generalization of results to other settings is a significant problem in practice. However, research training is currently focussed on techniques that are abandoned once graduate school is over. The scientist training of the practicing school psychologist could be redesigned to emphasize single case and clinical replication techniques

which would facilitate evaluation of treatments. A good example is the description of a university training course in which a group of students simultaneously conducted an intervention using a cognitive behavioral technique, and developed and evaluated a set of guidelines for producing outcome data on treatment (Cancelli et al, 1989). While the guidelines themselves are interesting, the process as a model for training students is worth replication itself.

Conclusion

Why is training so important. Bucher and Strauss (1961), writing on a process model for studying professions, discounted the notion that a profession is largely a "relatively homogeneous community whose members share identity, values, definitions of role, and interests" (p. 325) in favor of a model in which professionas are seen as "loose amalgamations of segments pursuing different objectives in different manners and more or less delicately held together under a common name at a particular period in history" (p. 326). They point out the importance of the socilization process during training, and suggest that various segments of the profession are in "competition for the allegiance of students", with students picking their path through "a maze of conflicting models" and making "momentous commitments thereby" (p. 334). If there is to be restructuring in the schools, and if school psychology is to

play a significant role in this process, the training programs will become an important arena for change.

References

Barnett, D.W. (1988). Professional judgment: A critical appraisal. School Psychology Review, 17, 658-672.

Bucher, R., & Strauss, A. (1961). Professions in process. American Journal of Sociology, 66, 325-334.

Cancelli, A., et al. (1989). A study of guidelines for the conduct and analysis of simultaneous clinical replications. Professional School Psychology, 4, 295-305.

Fudell, R., & Dougherty, K. (1989). Teacher support team model: State of policy and description of elements. Unpublished paper.

Hilliard, A.G. (1989). Back to Binet: The case against the use of IQ tests in the schools. Diagnostique, 14, 125-135.

Idol, L., & West, J.F. (1987). Consultation in special education (Part II): Training and practice. Journal of Learning Disabilities, 20, 474-494.

Levy-Leboyer, C. (1988). Success and failure in applying psychology. American Psychologist, 43, 779-785.

Milofsky, C. (1989). Testers and testing: The sociology of school psychology. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Pryzwansky, W.B. (1989). School consultation: Some considerations from a cognitive psychology perspective. Professional School Psychology, 4, 1-14.

Rosenfield, S., & Reynolds, M. (1990). Mainstreaming school psychology: A proposal to develop and evaluate alternative assessment methods and intervention strategies. School Psychology Review, 5, 55-65.

Schon, D.A. (1987). Educating the reflective practitioner. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Shapiro, E. S., & Lentz, F.E. (1985). A survey of school pschologists' use of bheavior modification procedures. Journal of School Psychology, 23, 327-336.

Slavin, R.E., Madden, N.A., Karweit, N.L. (1990). Effective programs for students at risk: Conclusions for practice and policy. In R.E. Slavin, N.L. Karweit, & N.A. Madden (Eds.). Effective programs for students at risk (pp. 355-372). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Weatherley, R., & Lipsky, M. (1977). Street-level bureaucrats

and institutional innovation: Implementing special-education reform. Harvard Educational Review, 47, 171-197.

Will, A.S. (1989). In the research arena, oat bran beats reading. New York Times, Wednesday, November 1, p. B9.

Wong, B.Y.L. (Ed.) (1989). Is IQ necessary in the definition of learning disabilities? Journal of Learning Disabilities, 22, 468-520

Table 1

Team Names

1. Teacher Assistance Team
2. Intervention Assistance Team
3. Student Support Team
4. School Support Team
5. School Based Assistance Team
6. School Level Student Assistance Team
7. Building-based Support Team
8. School Resource Committee
9. Preassessment Committee
10. Referral Committee
11. Classroom Alternative Support Team
12. Student Assistance Team
13. Problem Solving Team

From Fudell & Dougherty (1989).